

In the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method of operating a computing device which enables the communication of information between the device and a further computing device, each having a communications capability, the method comprising:

causing the device to request information regarding contact entries in a contact store of the further device;

~~and for causing~~ a hash key to be transmitted to the further device; [[,]]

causing the devices each to generate digests of contact entries in their respective contact stores using the hash key;

~~and for causing~~ the digests generated by the further device to be transmitted to the device, said digests including normalized versions of said contact entries;

using the digests to compare the contact entries of the respective contact stores; [[,]]
and

notifying at least one of the devices of contacts determined to be common to the contact stores of the devices.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the contact store of the device and/or the contact store of the further device is/are arranged as a plurality of overlapping or exclusive groups of contact entries.

3. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 2 wherein contact entries in the contact store of the device and/or the contact store of the further device are selectively excluded from the comparison of contact entries.

4. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 3 wherein at least one of the groups is selectively excluded from the comparison of contact entries.

5. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the contact entries are selected to comprise telephone numbers.

6. (Original) A method according to claim 5 wherein selected characters are removed from the telephone numbers.

7. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 6 wherein the telephone numbers are arranged to comprise a country or area code.

Claims 8 to 10 (Cancelled)

11. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein a network server is arranged to generate the hash key and communicate it to the devices.

12. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the comparison of contact entries is undertaken by one of the computing devices using data communicated to it by the other.

13. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the comparison of contact entries is undertaken by a network server.

14. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the contacts store accessible by the device and the contacts store accessible by the further device are held respectively on the device and the further device.

15. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the contacts store of the device and the contacts store of the further device are held by a third party.

16. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein the third party comprises the network server.

17. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein communication between the device and further device occurs over a wireless link.

18. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 17 wherein the wireless link comprises any one or more of a cellular phone network, infrared, Bluetooth or a 802.11 WiFi network.

Claims 19 to 23 (Cancelled)

24. (Currently amended) A computing device having a communications capability and a contacts store, the device ~~being configured~~ comprising:

means for configuring the device to request information regarding contact entries in a contact store of a further device and for a hash key to be transmitted to the further device; [[,]]

means for generating ~~to generate~~ digests of contact entries in the contact store of the device using the hash key, said digests including normalized versions of said contact entries;

means for and using the digests to compare contact entries of its contact store with contact entries of the contacts store of the further device; [[,]] and

means for notifying at the further device of contacts determined to be common to the contact stores of the devices.